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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 07 USNATO 000151

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SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT - APRIL 30, 2008

REF: STATE 43817

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Classified By: DCM Richard G. Olson, Jr., for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said that Karzai urged caution in judging the Kabul security situation following the April 27 assassination attempt. IMS Assistant Director for Operations Li Gobbi stated that Pakistani "peace deals" could negatively impact Afghan security, and that Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) may be planning to try to retake Musa Qala. A U.S. firm partially lost ISAF intra-theater sustainment airlift contract due to non-performance. NATO's Acting Senior Civilian Representative in Kabul, Ambassador Maurits Jochems, briefed that UNAMA is leading an effort to define a common position on reconciliation among the Afghan government and international community. Ambassador Nuland's call for significant pledges at the upcoming Paris Conference revealed skepticism from France, Germany, and Spain over whether the Paris Conference should be considered a pledging conference.

Canada expressed irritation over President Karzai's recent bashing of western forces to the press.

-- Balkans: The NAC approved the Initiating Directive to allow national military authorities to revise the KFOR Operational Plan to account for NATO's new tasks. The CMC briefed on his visit to Kosovo and informed the NAC that future uncertainty with the UN-EU missions could lead to KFOR assuming increased missions.

-- Africa) Support to the AU: No discussion.

-- Iraq: Italian Ambassador Stefanini mentioned that the third class of carabinieri-trained national police graduated on April 21.

-- Response to Terrorism: Spain urged Allies to support the UNSCR on Somalia now being drafted by Permanent Security Council nations U.S., France and UK. Spain also informed the NAC that a Spanish vessel, formerly seized by Somali pirates, had been liberated off the coast of Somalia.

-- Statement on Political Subjects: Ambassador Nuland informed PermReps that U.S. intelligence indicated it was a Russian MiG 29 aircraft which shot down a Georgian UAV in Georgian airspace on April 20. She also informed the NAC that some websites of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty have been cyber-attacked since April 28, and delivered points on Syria's clandestine nuclear program (see reftel), sharing with the NAC video evidence presented to the U.S. Congress last week.

-- AOB: The SYG reported that pending formal confirmation

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from Georgian authorities the NAC will visit Georgia on September 4 and 5.

-- Farewell to the PermRep of Slovakia: The SYG bade Ambassador Igor Slobodnik a fond farewell as this was his last NAC before leaving NATO.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

12. (C) The SYG said that in a call to Afghan President Karzai, the Afghan President blamed a lapse in his security services for the April 27 assassination attempt against him, and both the SYG and Karzai acknowledged that the attack should not lead to hasty conclusions about the security situation in Kabul. Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) General Henault stated at least six insurgents were involved in the attack, with three killed and three captured, and that responsibility for the attack was still unknown, despite claims by both the Taliban and Hizb-I Islami Gulbuddin. He noted the information ops victory gained by the enemy in this attack, but credits Afghan security forces with establishing the initial necessary security tactics that forced the attackers to carry out the attack under sub-optimal conditions, from 400 meters away.

13. (C) IMS Assistant Director for Operations MG Li Gobbi opened his brief by expressing skepticism toward a recently negotiated "peace deal" between the Swat district authority in Pakistan and militants, and similar efforts underway in South and North Waziristan. Analysis shows similar past agreements have led to increased enemy freedom of movement and safe haven in Pakistan's tribal areas, from which they operate against Afghanistan. Looking at the Regional Commands, Li Gobbi said that the impact of the April 27 attack on Afghan intentions to assume responsibility for Kabul, from both an Afghan and ISAF perspective, needed to be assessed. RC-North focused on cordon-and-search operations

in Kunduz, while Afghan forces in RC-West conducted security operations along the Ring Road, and ISAF forces conducted counter-IED training for the ANA 207th Corps. Li Gobbi stated that reporting suggests OMF are gathering in villages surrounding Musa Qala, and are likely to try to retake it following the poppy harvest. He noted increased OMF kinetic activity in RC-East, particularly in Kunar, where OMF had recently attacked a civilian truck convoy.

¶4. (C) Li Gobbi stated that the contract awarded to the U.S.-based Mesopotamia Group to provide ISAF intra-theater sustainment airlift had been partially terminated due to a long-standing inability of the firm to provide contracted lift in RC-South. Mesopotamia will now only continue to

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provide service in RC-North and RC-West, where it had been working, and JFC-Brunssum should have a new contract concluded by mid-May with a firm called Skylink to cover RC-South. Li Gobbi briefed that 2 Mi-8s should begin operating from Kandahar airfield on April 30, though. The U.S., Netherlands, and Australia have met RC-South's lift needs in the interim given the Mesopotamia Group's failure.

¶5. (C) Acting SCR Jochems briefed in person on three topics: the April 27 attack, reconciliation, and development. Jochems, who was present at the stadium during the attack, noted the attack was almost ineffective militarily, but succeeded with its desired media effect. He deferred to COMISAF to provide analysis and lessons learned, but noted that improved coordination between the MOI, MOD, and NDS should be one outcome. On reconciliation, he relayed PTS chief Professor Mojaddedi's complaints regarding lack of funding, and allegations that Coalition and Afghan forces are unwilling to provide sufficient guarantees against arrest to possible reconcilees. He cited a UNAMA-drafted paper, presently with NSA Rassoul, which goes beyond the PTS framework and seeks to establish a common reconciliation framework between the Afghan government and the international community. Jochems acknowledged the desirability of reconciliation, but cautioned Allies about taking too overt a public stance on it, lest the perception) already present among some in Kabul) be strengthened that Allies are looking for "an exit strategy on the cheap." On development, he called for a stronger NATO civilian presence in the provinces and in PRTs, reaffirmed that SRSG Eide seeks a pledging aspect to the Paris Conference, noted a database his office is developing in cooperation with ISAF on assistance projects delivered and planned, and noted that COMISAF has undertaken a review of ISAF's PRT structure.

¶6. (C) During the discussion period, Ambassador Nuland told Allies that SRSG Eide had a good series of high-level visits in Washington, including with the President, and that the U.S. intended to provide him assistance on strategic communications and other areas he felt he needed to bolster UNAMA's efforts. In this light, she drew upon the SECSTATE demarche cable to make a strong call for significant financial pledges at the Paris Conference. She said U.S. was prepared to put at least \$205 million toward the \$475 million needed for elections, and Allies needed to bridge the gap. The German PermRep stated he understood Paris to be a stocktaking conference, and also an opportunity for the Afghans to "make their case" to the international community. The Spanish PermRep noted there was no agreement on the nature of the Paris Conference, and asked that the NAC receive more information. He agreed with Germany that stocktaking would be crucial. The French Charge said she would be happy to provide more information to the NAC on the Conference, but had believed until now it was being worked between capitals. Of course it will be a stocktaking

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conference, she noted, as "it is not necessarily meant to be

a pledging conference."

¶7. (C) Ambassador Nuland, echoed by the SYG, also asked NATO military authorities for a final accounting of offers of additional forces for ISAF made at the Bucharest Summit. The CMC stated that National Military Reps are working the issue at SHAPE, but that clear military communications to SHAPE on contributions following the political statements at Bucharest have not been forthcoming.

¶8. (C) The Canadian PermRep expressed irritation at President Karzai's recent strong public criticism against the United States and ISAF, acknowledging the election context, but asking rhetorically if anybody was advising Karzai that running against ISAF in his elections did not bolster his case among populations in the NATO homelands. The German PermRep noted that the April 27 attack would need to be carefully factored into any decision-making on whether the Afghans could assume responsibility for Kabul later this year, as Karzai had announced at Bucharest. He noted a German project worth 36-million euros to build 33 police stations in RC-North. The Italian Charge announced a 10-million euro contribution to the Reconstruction Trust Fund, and a 63.4-million euro contribution to finish the second stage of the Kabul-Bamyan road.

¶9. (C) The Italian PermRep also asked if the April 27 attempt against Karzai could be traced to shortfalls in the Afghan National Police. CMC Henault cited the need to wait for an investigation, but reminded the NAC of well-known shortfalls in training ANP, and that by filling requirements to provide the ANA with embedded trainers (OMLTs), Allies could help U.S. ANA trainers shift their efforts to the police. MG Li Gobbi reinforced the importance of this notion, by stating that while EUPOL is still in its early days, it is only 50 percent sourced at approximately 120 personnel, with 80 of those at its Kabul headquarters.

Balkans

¶10. (C) The NAC formally approved the NAC Initiating Directive, which will provide NATO's military authorities with the necessary guidance to develop the 3rd revision of the Balkans Joint Operations Plan. Turkey informed the Council that while Ankara reluctantly supported consensus, they would issue a detailed paper elaborating Turkish views regarding NATO support to international organizations in Kosovo, as outlined in the directive (sent separately to EUR/RPM on April 30). The CMC briefed the NAC on the Military Committee's (MC) recent visit to Kosovo where they received operational briefings from COMJFC Naples and COMKFOR, and discussed the overall situation with the UN SRSG

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and the Deputy International Civilian Representative. Describing a calm, but very tense, picture, the CMC said that there is a lot of uncertainty in Kosovo in the run up to both the Serbian May 11 elections and what will happen with UNMIK authority/capability and the transition to the EULEX mission following the entry into force of the Kosovo constitution. This uncertainty was contributing to decreased Kosovar Albanian confidence in the Government of Kosovo and the international community, according to UN and ICO officials, he said. The CMC concluded that, if a worst case scenario develops, KFOR could be in a situation where it will have to assume some police functions, as well as be the first responder to violence. The CMC also informed the NAC that KFOR's operational capability has been stretched due to the high op tempo and the loss of both the Azerbaijani and Georgian contingents, and the impending transfer of at least one multi-specialized company from KFOR to EULEX. He said that, although the rotational deployment of the operational reserve force has provided some flexibility, COMKFOR believed that he may need at least three additional maneuver

battalions to support operations if KFOR finds itself in a worst case scenario. Cautioning that a worst case scenario had not yet occurred, CMC also raised the potential for future near-term discussion of employment of the in-theater tactical reserve, and possibly the Strategic Reserve Force (SRF), should a worsening of the situation on the ground materialize. The CMC informed the NAC that SACEUR is in the process of formulating military advice on what might be required in such a scenario.

¶11. (C/NF) Spain cautioned against drawing any conclusion that might lead to compromising KFOR's neutrality in an evolving situation and endorsed further discussions on the future of Kosovo, particularly following the Serbian elections. Turkey echoed the Spanish comments on the evolving situation and the unknown, saying that we are facing a reality that UNMIK's capability is diminishing and that the UN SYG needs a strong signal from the UNSCR members about not letting UNMIK weaken. The UK found CMC's brief "worrying" and expressed hope that SACEUR's advice can reach the NAC in order to have a discussion prior to the SYG's discussion with UN SYG at the end of May. Ambassador Nuland reassured her colleagues that the U.S., as a UN Security Council member, was doing everything it could to keep engaging with the UN SYG and urged all Allies to do the same. She also noted (supported by Italy) that if SACEUR's advice on force generation reflected what CMC briefed, then it would be better to get it done sooner rather than later. The CMC responded to Turkish, Slovenian, and Dutch questions on KFOR's operations and possible future force generation saying that KFOR is currently operating as a responder within its mandate. The SYG concluded by saying that the discussion about KFOR force levels was of extreme importance, but that they needed to have SACEUR's advice before they could take it further. He promised to have an in-depth informal discussion

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following the May 11 elections on the way forward in the Balkans.

Iraq

¶12. (C) Italian Ambassador Stefanini mentioned that the third class of carabinieri-trained national police graduated on April 21. Italian General Siazzu, the head of the carabinieri training, attended the graduation and then left the country to visit a carabinieri training program in Afghanistan.

Response to Terrorism

¶13. (C) Spain urged Allies to support the evolving UNSCR on Somalia now being drafted by Permanent Security Council nations U.S., France and UK. Spain also informed that a Spanish vessel, formerly seized by Somali pirates, had been liberated off Somalia.

Statements on Political Subjects

¶14. (C) Ambassador Nuland informed PermReps that U.S. intelligence indicated that it was a Russian MiG-29 aircraft which shot down a Georgian UAV in Georgian airspace on April 20. The Ambassador said the U.S. has provided the IMS intelligence confirming that the plane was a Russian-origin MiG-29 Fulcrum and that the attack was enabled by a Russian origin radar.

¶15. (C) Ambassador Nuland also informed the NAC that some websites of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty have been cyber-attacked since April 28. The attack was mainly focused

on Radio Free Europe's Belarus service, but websites serving Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Croatia have also been affected.

¶16. (C) Ambassador Nuland also delivered points on Syria's clandestine nuclear program (see reftel) and shared with the NAC video evidence presented to the U.S. Congress last week of U.S. assessments that North Korea assisted Syria to construct the nuclear reactor which was destroyed by Israeli aircraft in September 2007.

AOB

¶17. (C) The SYG reported that, pending formal confirmation

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from Georgian authorities, the NAC will visit Georgia on September 4 and 5.

Farewell to the PermRep of Slovakia

¶18. (C) The SYG and other PermReps bade Ambassador Igor Slobodnik a fond farewell as this was his last NAC before leaving NATO. The SYG recalled Slobodnik's emotional day in April 2004 when the Slovakian flag was raised at NATO HQ and praised his many contributions since that time. Slobodnik lobbied for a favorable decision in December 2008 on MAP for Georgia and Ukraine (the Ukrainian Ambassador also had thanked AMB Slobodnik for his support earlier in the day at the NUC) and expressed optimism that a new spirit was in the air on NATO-EU relations.
NULAND